

5.5 Blue Peter

with John Noakes

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There's another four months before Dr Who returns to television, but why wait? Ask your grocer for a large cardboard box and build your own toy theatre complete with scenery and monsters. Have a pencil and paper handy for details.

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DR WHO - FOR YOU!

Missing Dr Who? Don't despair! Invent your own adventures and amaze and amuse your friends with the BLUE PETER DR WHO TOY THEATRE.

You don't have to be good at drawing. These outlines of the Doctor and Leela are ready for you to cut out, stick on to card and colour. You can trace them too, if you need extra figures, and use them as scale model guides for any other human characters.

As for the Theatre, Scenery, and the Monsters - watch today's Blue Peter for full details.

P.S. Coming shortly - how to make your own Dr Who Sound Effects!



Richard Evans

Bring Dr Who into your home - today Blue Peter shows you how: 5.5

BLUE PETER THEATRE

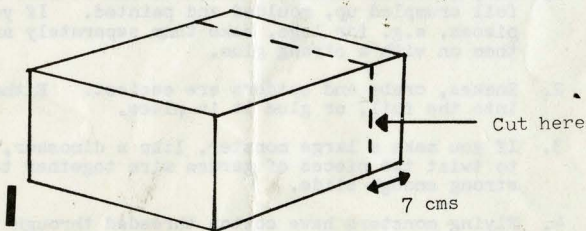


The Theatre

You will need:

- Stiff card;
- A Large grocery box;
- Brown paper or paint;
- Glue;
- Braid (odd lengths & colours will do);
- A cardboard Tube (e.g. kitchen roll or foil);
- Corrugated cardboard;
- Garden cane (Thin);
- A cake doily;
- Gold paint;
- Paint for the outside of the theatre (preferably emulsion);
- Material and fringing for the curtain.

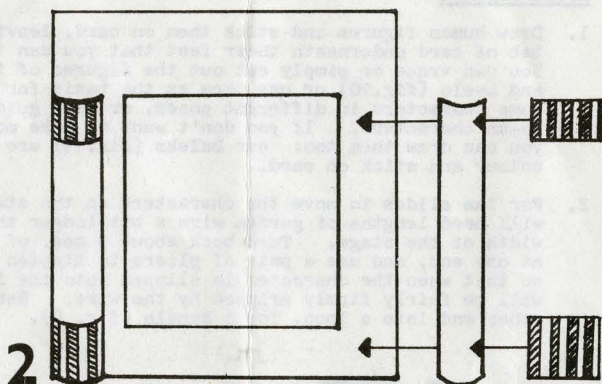
1. The stage itself is made from the end of the grocery box, which should be about 30 cms. wide and 34 cms. deep. Cut about 7 cms. in from the end of the box, and reseal any open flaps, so that the sides are solid (fig. 1).



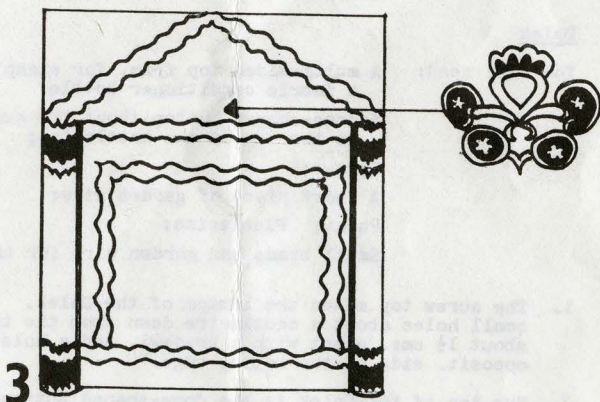
2. To hide any lettering, cover your stage with brown paper, or paint it.
3. For the front of the theatre you need a large piece of stiff card: ours was a 48 cm. square of stiff card, but you could use the side of a large grocery box. Cut out an opening for the stage 25 cms. square, with the bottom of the square coming about 7 cms. in from one side, so that when it is glued in place, the opening will be at the same level as the stage.

To decorate the stage:

- a) Find or cut to size a cardboard tube the right length to reach from the bottom of the theatre to just above the stage opening. Cut it in half lengthways. Decorate the top and bottom with strips of corrugated paper, and stick the 'pillars' one each side of the theatre front (fig. 2).

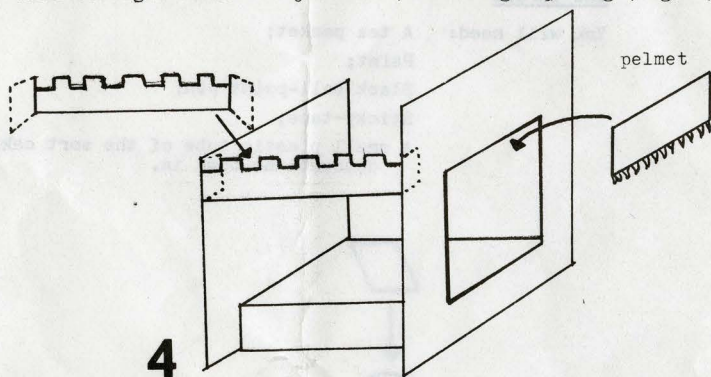


- b) Glue braid along the pillar ends, around the stage, and in an arch (fig. 3). It doesn't matter if the braid is old, or if it's not all one colour.

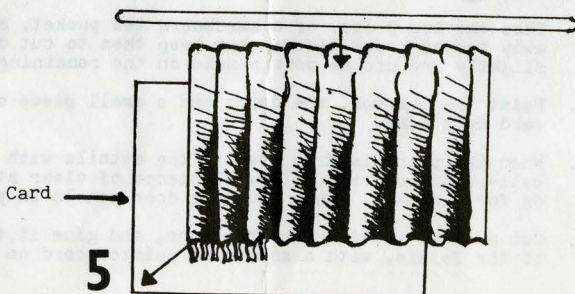


- c) Paint the front, braid, pillars, and all, any colour you like: ours was a light blue. Use emulsion paint rather than gloss, if you can, and for a really good finish give it a couple of coats. When the paint is dry, highlight the braid by picking out part of the pattern in a different colour: gold looks particularly good.
- d) Cut an interestingly-shaped section from a paper doily to decorate the centre of the arch, and paint it with the same colour as on the braid - or, if you have one, use a gold paper doily (fig. 3).
4. For the back of the stage, cut from one of the long sides of your cardboard box a rectangle of cardboard the same width as the stage, and high enough to come just above the stage opening. Paint it to match the front of the theatre.

5. The side-supports that hold the scenery are two strips of strong cardboard, cut to the same length as the stage from front to back, with an extra piece at each end to bend back to glue. Cut away centimetre-sized squares along the top edge of both pieces of card, one at each end near the bends and four more at regular intervals. (The exact number and distances don't matter, but make sure both pieces match, or the scenery will hang crooked.)
6. Glue the back and the front of the theatre in place, and glue the side supports from the top of the theatre's back straight across to just above the stage opening (fig. 4).



7. To make the curtain 'pelmet' above the stage opening, cut a piece of card about 5 cms. deep and slightly wider than the stage opening. Cover one side with the same material as you are going to use for the main curtain, glueing the edges onto the wrong side of the card. A velvet type of material is best. Trim one long edge by glueing some fringing on the front. Glue the pelmet inside the stage opening, with the right side facing outwards.
8. To make the curtain:
 - a) Measure the distance from the top of the side-supports to the floor of the stage, and cut out a piece of card that high, and a little wider than the stage opening.
 - b) Cut out a piece of material $1\frac{1}{2}$ times this width and slightly deeper. Glue small hems along the two short sides and one long edge. Glue fringing along the right side of the hemmed long edge so that the bottom of the fringing hangs a fraction below the bottom of the curtain.



- c) On the right side of the material make eight to ten tiny folds at intervals, pinning them at top and bottom until all the extra width is used up and it fits across the cardboard.
 - d) Spread glue all round the edge of the cardboard and lay the pinned curtain over it, with the extra depth at the top. Press the edges onto the glue, and working from top to bottom smooth the folds into place. Take out the pins when the glue is dry.
 - e) Glue the raw top edge of the curtain to the back of the card.
9. Cut a piece of garden cane the same length as the front of the theatre is wide. When this is stuck across the top of the curtain, holding the pleats in place, the ends of the cane will rest in the front 'notches' in the side-support. But before you glue it, check that the curtain will be the right height, with the fringing barely touching the stage floor: move the cane to make it higher or lower if necessary (fig 5).

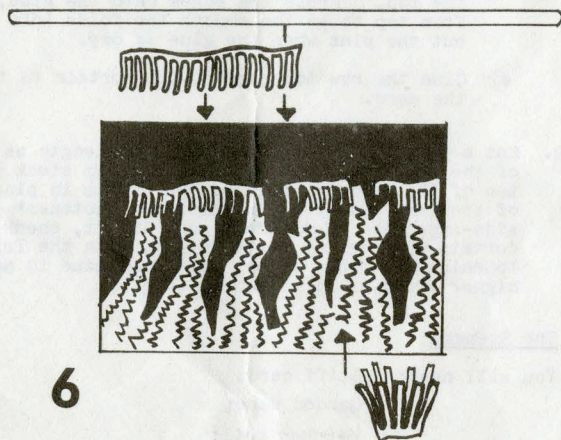
The Scenery

You will need: Stiff card;
 Garden cane;
 Kitchen foil;
 Apple trays; (or egg trays)
 Material or crepe paper, (preferably green);
 Brown paint.

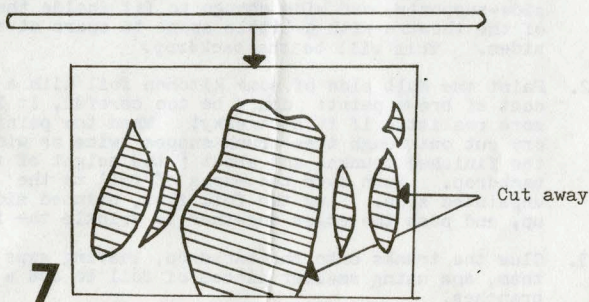
The Jungle

1. Cut a piece of stiff card as high as the distance between the floor of the stage and the top of the side-supports, and wide enough to fit inside the back of the theatre with a little space to spare at the sides. This will be the backdrop.
2. Paint the dull side of some kitchen foil with a thin coat of brown paint: don't be too careful, it looks more realistic if it's streaky! When the paint is dry cut out rough tree-trunk shapes twice as wide as the finished trunks, and about $\frac{2}{3}$ the height of the backdrop. Turn over the edges of foil to the unpainted side. Lay the foil flat, painted side up, and push the edges together to wrinkle the foil.
3. Glue the trunks onto the backdrop, leaving gaps between them, and using smaller pieces of foil to add a few branches.
4. The leaves are made of narrow strips of material. Try to use two or three different shades of green. Cut slits in the long side of the strips to fringe it. Glue the long unfringed edge along the top of the tree-trunks, and build up layers, alternating the colours irregularly to the top edge of the back-cloth. As a final touch add some tufts of grass by rolling up short lengths of fringing sticking them at the feet of the trees.

5. Cut a piece of garden cane as long as the stage front is wide, and glue it behind the top edge of the scene, checking that it is the right height to hold the backdrop in place when each end of the cane rests in one of the pairs of notches in the side-support (fig 6).



6. For the middle 'arch' of scenery cut a piece of card the same size as the backdrop. Draw a rough sketch of the trees on your piece of card leaving the centre part bare. Cut away the centre and the gaps between the trees. Cover the tree-trunks with painted foil and the tops of the trees with strips of fringed material, as for the backdrop. (fig 7)



7. The front pair of wings are two pieces of card about a quarter the width of the backdrop, cut into tree-shapes and decorated as before, then glued to a piece of cane.

The Cave

Cut the card just as for the jungle scenery, but cover it with crumpled kitchen foil, and paint with any colour or mixture of colours you like.

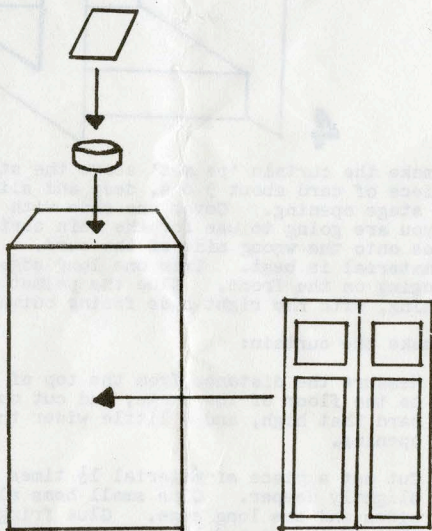
Tardis or space-ship

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Apple trays, with their regular pattern, make good interior scenes for the Tardis or any other space ship. Simply cut them to size, and fix to the canes with sticky-tape, as glue may melt the polystyrene. To give the impression of a smaller place, put the back-drop nearer the front of the stage. This will mean you only need one set of wings. Also, for quick scene-changes, you can have an outdoor scene already set up behind an indoor one.

The Tardis

You will need: A tea packet;
Paint;
Black ball-point pen;
Sticky-tape;
A small plastic tube of the sort cake decorations come in.



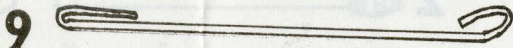
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1. Take the top 9 cms. of a cardboard tea packet, and cut away two adjacent sides: but keep them to cut down slightly and use as door panels on the remaining sides.
2. Paint the tea-box, the doors and a small piece of spare card dark blue.
3. When the paint is dry, draw in the details with a ball-point pen, and put small pieces of clear sticky-tape on for windows. Then glue the door panels in place (fig 8).
4. Cut a small section from the tube, and glue it to the top of the Tardis, with a square of painted card on top.

Drawn Figures

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1. Draw human figures and stick them on card, leaving a tab of card underneath their feet that you can turn back. You can trace or simply cut out the figures of the Doctor and Leela (fig.10) or use them as the basis for drawing the same characters in different poses, or as a guide to other human characters. If you don't want to make model monsters, you can draw them too: our Daleks (fig.11) are ready to colour and stick on card.
2. For the slides to move the characters on the stage, you will need lengths of garden wire a bit longer than the width of the stage. Turn back about 3 cms. of wire at one end, and use a pair of pliers to tighten the bend, so that when the character is slipped into the fold, it will be fairly firmly gripped by the wire. Bend the other end into a loop, for a handle (fig. 9).



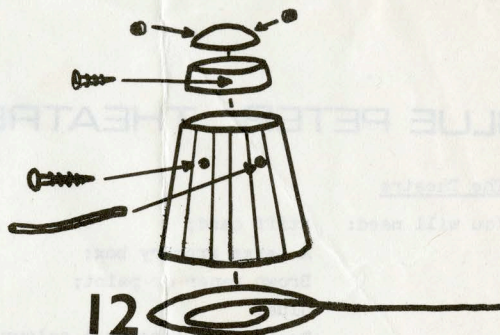
3. Paint the wire to match the colour of your stage.

NB A useful tip in performance is to keep moving slightly the character who is talking.

Dalek

You will need: A multi-sided top from, for example, a fabric conditioner bottle;
A dome-shaped button about the same size as the top of the bottle top;
Screws;
A short piece of garden wire;
Paint; Plasticine;
Small beads, and garden wire for the slide.

1. The screw top makes the bottom of the Dalek. Make two small holes about a centimetre down from the top and about $1\frac{1}{2}$ cms. apart with a bradawl, and a hole at the opposite side on the bottom edge.
2. The top of the Dalek is the dome-shaped button: join it to the base with a knob of plasticine, moulding it to shape so that it slopes down smoothly. Mark lines in the plasticine with a modelling knife or the point of a pair of scissors.
3. The 'arm' is a screw twisted into one of the holes, and the 'exterminator' is a short length of garden wire pushed through the other. For the Dalek's antenna, push a second, shorter screw into the plasticine.
4. Either paint the whole Dalek or, if you have a nice shiny button, you could leave that unpainted.
5. The lights on the 'head' are small red beads, and the 'eye' on the antenna is a small yellow bead.
6. Stuff the inside of the Dalek with newspaper.



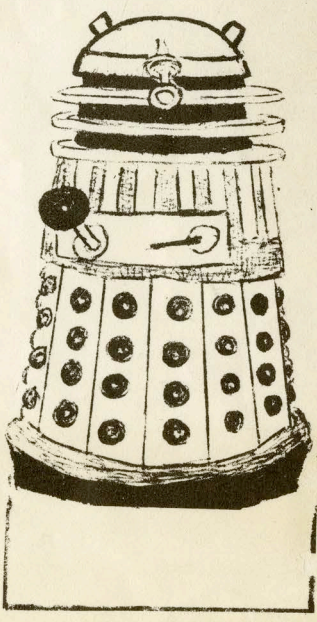
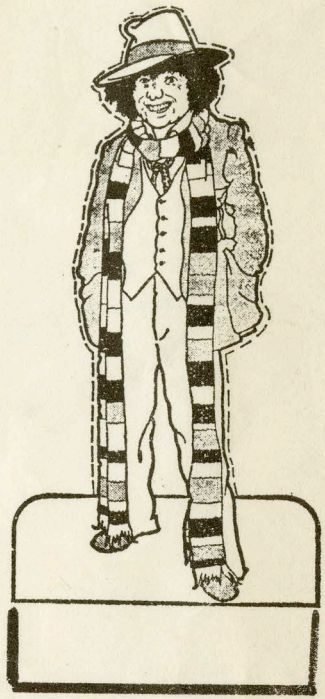
7. Make a slide for the Dalek to move on just as for a drawn figure, but instead of folding back one end, bend it into a circle, and glue it onto a disc of card the right size to fit inside the bottom of the Dalek. Now glue the disc in place, with the wire leading out through the hole you have made on the bottom edge of the Dalek, (fig 12).

Monsters

You will need: Kitchen foil;
Paint;
Garden wire or cane;
Thread.

1. Many different kinds of monsters can be made from kitchen foil crumpled up, moulded and painted. If you need extra pieces, e.g. for legs, make them separately and stick them on with a strong glue.
2. Snakes, crabs and spiders are easiest. Either push a slide into the foil, or glue it in place.
3. If you make a large monster, like a dinosaur, you may need to twist two pieces of garden wire together to make a strong enough slide.
4. Flying monsters have cotton threaded through the body and tied to a piece of garden cane: if you want them to stay in the air by themselves while you operate another character, make sure the cane is long enough to stretch between the scenery supports.
5. You can make a bat from two layers of foil glued together to strengthen it, with another piece of foil scrunched up for the body. Paint body and wings, then glue them together when dry.
Alter the angle of the wings, or add extra supporting threads, to make it fly evenly.
6. If you already have any small, rubber monsters, they can look very effective glued on slides or hung from a thread.

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